



Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

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Decision

Matter of: John C. Kathmann
File: B-248906.2
Date: September 30, 1993

DIGEST

A transferred employee's temporary quarters subsistence expense claim under 41 C.F.R. § 302-5.4(a) for laundry supplies may be allowed. Consumable laundry goods, such as detergent, bleach, etc., may be included as part of subsistence expenses, so long as the quantity purchased is consistent with the period of temporary quarters authorized and the cost is reasonable.

DECISION

This decision is in response to a request from an Authorized Certifying Officer, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior.¹ It concerns an employee's entitlement to be reimbursed the expense of laundry supplies as subsistence expenses incident to temporary quarters occupancy in 1991. For the following reasons, we conclude that he may be reimbursed for consumable laundry supplies, provided that the quantity purchased is consistent with the period of temporary quarters and the cost involved is reasonable.

Mr. John C. Kathmann, an employee of the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement, was transferred from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Charleston, West Virginia, effective October 7, 1991. Incident to that transfer, he was authorized a subsistence expense allowance while occupying temporary quarters. The agency disallowed the laundry supplies portion of his subsistence expense voucher claim for the fourth 30-day period based on our decision at 52 Comp. Gen. 730 (1973).² On reclaim by Mr. Kathmann, the agency asks, if we allow Mr. Kathmann's claim, that we provide the agency with guidance as to allowable laundry supplies for reimbursement purposes under the Federal Travel

¹Mr. Roy E. Morris.

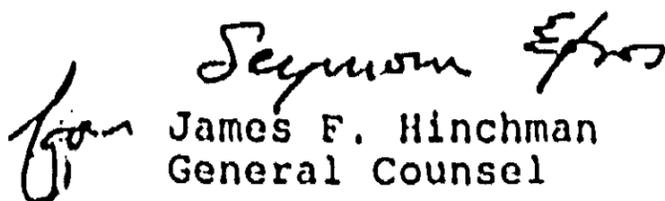
²B-177909, April 19, 1973.

Regulations (FTR). The agency also asks whether 52 Comp. Gen. 730, supra, has been correctly applied to Mr. Kathmann's claim.

The issue in 52 Comp. Gen. 730, supra, was whether certain expenses incurred by an employee on a long-term temporary duty assignment, while renting quarters other than in motels or hotels may be included as lodging costs for daily averaging purposes. We concluded that, if the expense incurred was for an item or service normally included in the price of motel or hotel accommodations in the vicinity, it could be included as part of the employee's average cost of lodging. However, that decision is not applicable here because the regulations governing temporary quarters subsistence expenses expressly provide for laundry and cleaning expense reimbursements.

Section 302-5.4(a) of the FTR,³ states that an employee may be reimbursed for actual subsistence expenses incurred provided these are incident to occupancy of temporary quarters and are reasonable in amount. Allowable subsistence expenses include charges for ". . . laundry, and cleaning and pressing of clothing." Section 302-5.4(b) requires that, other than when coin-operated facilities are used, laundry and cleaning expenses are to be receipted.

These provisions show that the expenses to be allowed as temporary quarters subsistence expenses include the cost of consumable goods, such as detergent, bleach, etc. The cost of durable cleaning equipment such as the purchase of an iron is not allowable. Therefore, reimbursement of such laundry supplies in Mr. Kathmann's case is allowable provided that the quantity purchased is consistent with the authorized period of temporary quarters and that the cost is reasonable.⁴


James F. Hinchman
General Counsel

³41 C.F.R. § 302-5.4(a) (1992).

⁴George H. Beail, B-199695, Nov. 30, 1981.